

## Andrew Jackson to William Berkeley Lewis, February 21, 1813, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

**TO WILLIAM B. LEWIS.**

Headquarters Near Washington, M. T., February 21, 1813

*Dear Sir.* I approached the vicinity of Natchez late on the evening of the 15th. instant, and by express from major Carrol who I had sent ahead to meet the cavalry, and forward me any communications from the Post office Natchez, I recd, two letters from Genl Wilkinson of the 6th. and 22d. January which induced me to put to shore about 2 miles above the town. These communications were of the most friendly kind, advising me of the scarcity of forrage below, and the propriety of landing at Natchez for the health of my troops and the advantageous position from which to make a movement to any point that an enemy might shew a front. These reasons urgent in themselves, and perfectly meeting my views, with a belief that the[y] would Justify, a deviation from the orders of the Governor which directed me to proceed to New-orleans, I determined to drop down to Natchez and disembark my troops; for this purpose on the morning of the 16th. I dropped down to Natchez and tied to the shore where I recd another letter from Genl Wilkingson of the 25 ulto reiterating his reasons in stronger terms and advising and requesting me to disembark my troops and encamp them at or in the neighbourhood of this place, which I accordingly did on the morning of the 17th. and marched them to the cantonment washington where I met the Cavalry, who had arived the evening of the 16th. in good health. finding the cantonment washington in a state of decay, the houses rotting down, and a collection of as much filth that with one weeks sun would create a plaige I have laid out an encampment on a beautifull plain about a mile west of washington and 4 miles from Natchez, to which place this day I should have removed my troops, was it not for the torrent of rain that has and

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is now falling. This place affords a plentiful supply of wood and good water and promises health to my troops. I experienced seven days detention by the running of the ice in the ohio and cumberland one day by the loss of Capt Wallace's boat which went down in three [minutes] to her roof, but by the exertions of the officers, all the men were saved, and all the Baggage, a few musquetts, bayonets and Boxes were lost. we lost on our passage two men out of the second regiment, none out of the first. The Detachment are as healthy as we could expect, in fine spirits and under good subordination, and has improved more in their discipline for the time and opportunity than any troops ever did before.

I recd. your letter of the 8th. instant on the 16th. and beg of you to accept my thanks for your attention to the arms returned, you will retain the soldier left in the hospital, for the purpose of keeping the arms clean advise me of his name and to what company he belongs by the earliest opportunity. . . .